

Letter from Taizé

Bimonthly 3.50 FF

3

June-July 1994

Next European
Meeting of
Young Adults

PARIS

28 December 1994 -
1 January 1995

EASTER IN TAIZE

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Celebrating the Resurrection

Each year, Easter is one of the high-points of life on the hill. During the Easter season this year, from Lent to Pentecost, 25,000 young adults spent a week in Taizé. They came from both Eastern and Western Europe as well as from other continents.

Easter morning, the Church of Reconciliation and its extensions were filled to overflowing and resounded with songs of jubilation sung countless times: "*Christus resurrexit*; Christ is risen!" In successive waves, the light of Easter was brought to the four corners of the church; each person lit their own candle from the person next to them and passed the flame on in their turn, in a simple gesture of receiving and giving.

"Christ Jesus, if you were not risen," Brother Roger prayed, "we would not be here together searching for your presence, for your forgiveness. But you are risen, and each of us can say to you: without your Holy Spirit who dwells in our hearts, where would we be? You love us."

During the celebration, a young brother from Germany made his life-commitment. Brother Roger welcomed him into the community, reminding him that "the Lord Christ, in his compassion and in his love, had chosen him to be in the Church a sign of brotherly love."

A week later, with the joy of Easter still very much alive, a number of local people from nearby towns and villages came to Taizé for an afternoon of sharing and prayer. After listening to news of recent events important for the community, they met in small groups to reflect on questions inspired by the letter *From One Beginning to Another*: "How can I transmit the humble trusting of

faith in my own situation? What responsibility, in the name of Christ, am I called to take? How can I look for reconciliation and bring peace to others in their trials?" Each person spoke about the concrete circumstances of his or her life and was listened to attentively by the others.

ALL THE BISHOPS OF THE CHURCH OF SWEDEN IN TAIZE

The week after Easter, from April 8th to 10th, the fourteen bishops of the Church of Sweden spent three days of prayer and reflection in Taizé, in the midst of all the young adults who were present on the hill.

This was the first time that the bishops of the Church of Sweden travelled together outside their country. Preparing the visit, the Archbishop of Uppsala, Gunnar Weman, wrote to Brother Roger: "For a long time now voices have been heard among the bishops suggesting a visit to Taizé, both to learn and to participate in the spiritual experience which has given new hope to so many people, especially among the younger generations."

"Many in our Church have been deeply influenced and touched by your work. The Spirit seems to touch human beings by your community and by the

Christ, you open our eyes to the wonder of your love. Since your resurrection, by the Holy Spirit you have been coming to encounter each person wherever he or she is at. And still more, even should the awareness of your presence in us fade away, you say to each of us again and again: I am here; come, follow me; you will find a meaning for your life; you will discover where to find rest for your heart.

**prayer by Brother Roger for
Easter morning**

spiritual life which you lead. This has given a new impetus both to the life of individuals and to the life of our parishes. The songs of Taizé are known by almost everyone. Like concentric waves which spread out on the water, these songs have even reached the far north."

Speaking before 3,000 young adults

on Saturday evening in the Church of Reconciliation, Archbishop Weman said, "In our churches, we devote years of effort to preparing conferences that bring together fewer young people than those who are here this evening. In Taizé, week after week the young come quite naturally. You invite them simply

to celebrate the resurrection of Christ, which is at the heart of our faith."

The bishops of Sweden wished to reflect together with the brothers of Taizé on the spiritual longings that are coming to light today and on the urgent need for reconciliation among Christians.

IN MUNICH, FIVE MONTHS AFTER THE EUROPEAN MEETING

Continuities

Recently, the priest in charge of young adult ministry in Munich asked himself, "What is going on in Munich after the European meeting at the end of 1993?"

This is what he wrote:

A network of prayers has been created in the greater Munich area. In these places of prayer—there are sixty of them—people go to the wellsprings of faith. Three examples are representative of them all: from Monday to Friday, there is a midday prayer in a parish church; on Friday, an evening prayer in a crypt; every last Sunday of the month, an afternoon prayer in the cathedral.

Brother Roger's letter, *From One Beginning to Another*, which served as a basis for the sharing during the European meeting, is now being used by all the parishes as a text to meditate on.

It is important that many people from Munich go to Taizé this summer, to help with preparations for the next European meeting, among other things by telling people about their experiences in preparing the meeting in Munich.

As a result of this meeting, many Europeans became acquainted with the Church of Munich. Many of them, particularly young people from Eastern Europe, were impressed by the social-service activities and the public presence of our Church.

The meeting was a sign against hatred of foreigners and hostility against immigrants.

The awakening in Munich of a new sensitivity to Church values and to the riches of the different parishes should not be underestimated. Many people here were confirmed in their Gospel commitments as a result of the "places" and "people of hope."

The European meeting came at the right moment, at a time when many are turning inward and withdrawing into private life in a spirit of resignation. The meeting woke them up and stimulated them. In many parishes, people discovered one another as a result of the meeting, and since then they have been working together.

DURING THE SUMMER MEETINGS IN TAIZÉ

Continuing...

...OUR REFLECTION

This year, the letter *From One Beginning to Another* will be used for the small-group sharing.

People began reflecting on this letter during the European meeting in Munich. Since then, they have been able to re-read it and to see how it can stimulate their searching and commitment.

Young-adult ministers in Munich have been using the letter to offer themes for reflection to youth groups in their area. For example:

What new beginnings can I hope for, for myself, for our parish, for our city....? How do doubts paralyze me? How can I live my faith in God as a trust that inspires all my undertakings? How can our life let the Gospel shine through? When do we find ourselves walking on several roads at the same time? In what situations, in spite of dis-

appointments and oppositions, can we welcome others and thus go beyond hatred and misunderstanding?

A stay in Taizé can help us to find ways of entering into an inner journey by which we open ourselves to the activity of the Holy Spirit who creates something new in each person. Going further in this dialogue with Christ is supported by reflection on the Bible. Each day, Bible passages are introduced and meditated on in silence or in small groups.

...A COMMITMENT

"A communion with Christ opens us to run the risk of responsibilities" (*From One Beginning to Another*). There are many people who witness to the responsibilities which they are taking in order to prepare a different future for those entrusted to them. This summer's

meetings will certainly help people go further with this search:

By what simple gestures can we begin to share material goods? How can we curb all forms of hatred? How can we alleviate human suffering?

Sharing examples of concrete actions can help each person to discover what they themselves can accomplish at the present time. Theme-groups will deal with these topics each week in Taizé.

...THE COMMON PRAYER

In many cities, people have begun to pray together regularly. The simple means mentioned in note 26 of this year's letter can help to create a space where prayer is lived out in an inner freedom that facilitates intimacy with God.



Every Week Throughout the Year

Meetings of Young Adults in Taizé

Every week throughout the year, it is possible to come to Taizé to take part in meetings that bring together, from Sunday to the following Sunday, young adults from throughout Europe and from different continents. It is also possible for adults and families to take part in meetings prepared for them.

This year, those who spend a week in Taizé can choose among several different possibilities:

- The group devoted to the wellsprings of faith will alternate introductions to Bible texts with times of sharing in small groups and listening to witnesses from Europe and other continents. Theme-groups will enable people to reflect on topics such as committing oneself alongside those who are forgotten, responding to Christ's call, and being bearers of trust and reconciliation.
- Those who wish to go further in understanding the Bible can join a group where the introductions are centred on a particular theme.
- New areas have been set up to offer more possibilities for silence to those who desire it.
- Those who have already come to Taizé or who have taken part in a European meeting can, if they so desire, have a different experience by spending several weeks in Taizé. An itinerary of formation will be proposed to them: speaking in depth with a brother or with a sister of St Andrew to help them view their own personal journey in the light of the Gospel, working in a team with other young people from different countries to take responsibility for some of the tasks related to the welcome. Depending on their situation, they can be welcomed free of charge beginning the second or third week. They should write to Taizé in advance.

To register or for further information, write to Meetings, Taizé Community, 71250 Taizé, France. Tel (33) 85 50 30 02 (in English, 10am to noon and 4:30 to 6:30pm) or, if urgent, 85 50 30 30. Fax: (33) 85 50 30 16.

Accommodation

Living conditions are simple. During the summer months, bring a tent if at all possible. Those under 30 stay in tents or, in the winter, in heated dormitories (boys and girls separate). Bring sleeping-bag and lightweight mattress. Those over 30, depending on age, stay in dormitories or in rooms for two or several persons, in Taizé or, in the event of space limitations, in the surrounding area. The exact place will be indicated upon arrival. Bring sheets or sleeping-bag.

Costs

Upon arrival, participants are asked to contribute toward daily costs. (Some young people are unable to contribute.) The welcome of visitors is financed by these contributions and by the work

of the community. No organizations provide any financial assistance. Suggested prices for 1994, in French francs per day, for those under 30: GB, NZ 27 to 37; SCAND 36 to 44; IRL 22 to 29; USA, CAN, AUS 33 to 40. Since they have more resources, adults are asked to pay more. Adults should estimate double to triple the price for young people, depending on whether accommodation is in tent, dormitory or room. Specific lodging places cannot be reserved in advance. The brothers live by their own work alone. The community accepts no donations for itself, not even a brother's personal inheritance, nothing at all. Many of the expenses incurred through the welcoming of young people, as well as the maintenance of buildings, are covered by the community.


"Operation Hope" helps pay part of the travel expenses for young people who wish to go to Taizé or to European meetings but are unable to meet the costs on their own. At present it helps cover the costs of printing New Testaments for young people in Eastern Europe. In some cases, it sends humanitarian aid to problem areas around the world.

Medical insurance: bring documents needed (E 111 for EC residents).

A good welcome for everyone will be assured if all those who can do so avoid coming during the first week of August and plan instead to come in late June, early July, late August or in September.

Registration form

to be sent to:
Meetings, TAIZE-COMMUNITY, 71250 CLUNY, France.
Tel: (+33) 85 50 30 02, Fax (+33) 85 50 30 16



First Name : _____

Family Name : _____

Address : _____

_____ (with post code and country)

Telephone : Occupation : Age :

I wish to participate in the meetings from to

(Please circle "yes" or "no")

Will bring my own tent : yes / no

Means of transport: Nuneaton Coaches other coach minibus car train other :

For the disabled, adult group-leaders, those who cannot sleep on the floor, please fill in the following:

I need a bed yes/no. If "yes" please circle below who you are:

woman man couple family with children disabled person helper of disabled person

(age of the children :)

I receive the Letter of Taizé : yes / no

I have already been to Taizé : yes / no (last stay : month year)

"Enter Your Master's Joy"

In the fifth chapter of his gospel, Saint Matthew tells us, "Seeing the crowds, [Jesus] went up on the mountain. He sat down and his disciples came to him. Opening his mouth, he began to teach them, saying..." (Matt 5,1-2). At the beginning of the history of God's people, on another mountain (Ex 19ff), God had given his Torah, a word usually translated as "law" but whose primary meaning is "teaching." By receiving and keeping the Torah, Israel learned to know its God and to be, by its existence, a living sign of God's presence in the midst of the world.

If Jesus gives his own Torah at the beginning of the gospel, that is not in order to supplant the Torah transmitted by Moses but to "fulfill" it (Matt 5,17). In other words, Jesus' teaching completes what went before by showing its deepest meaning and its underlying unity. Jesus thus reveals the depths of God's own heart.

The Torah revealed on Mount Sinai begins with the "ten commandments," known in Hebrew as the "ten words." In an analogous manner, Jesus' Torah begins with a series of sayings all having the same form, known to us as the Beatitudes (Matt 5,3-12). Their structure is already a sign of something fundamentally new: instead of being phrased as commandments, they are an announcement of good news. The word "happy" or "blessed," *makarios* in Greek, indicates neither the desire to bless nor a subjective happiness, a feeling, but refers to a situation that is objectively beneficial, desirable. And while being a present reality, this situation is full of promise for the future: most of the beatitudes conclude with a verb in the future tense.

Filled with joy, Jesus thus announces that some human beings are benefiting from God's entry into the world; they can easily find their place in God's plan to communicate the fullness of life (cf. Luke 10,21). Not that God reserves this happiness for them alone, as a way of rewarding them for their behaviour. No, as Jesus explains by the

image of the sower (Matt 13,3-9), God offers his life to all without exception, but the nature of the ground will determine the kind of fruit that grows. The Beatitudes are a kind of description of the "good earth" that can welcome God's seed and allow it to bear fruit a hundredfold. They do not describe eight or nine different groups, but different facets of one and the same reality, the space where God's Kingdom is coming to birth.

In Matthew's gospel we find two kinds of beatitudes. The first can be called *paradoxical* beatitudes: happy the poor, the defenceless ("meek"), those who mourn, victims of injustice ("those hungry for justice"), the persecuted. It is essential not to try and explain away the paradox contained in these phrases, for it contains an important message: when God comes to human beings to bring the fullness of life, he does not do it in the way we imagine. God's ways are not our ways (Isa 55,8); God's coming is unsettling and involves an overturning of human priorities (1 Sam 2,4-5; Luc 1,51-53; 1 Cor 1,18-29).

In Matthew's beatitudes, we can notice a movement towards an inner attitude: the poor *in spirit*, the gentle, those hungry *for justice*... In thus emphasizing the disposition of people's hearts, Jesus is right in the main line of Biblical revelation. Although poverty in the Bible is seen at first as a social

condition deserving scorn or pity, it gradually comes to stand for a state of mind characterized by openness to God, confident surrender to him. The "poor person" is above all the one who stands before God with empty hands, confident that everything will be given. This does not in the least imply a separation between an outward condition and an inner attitude: the attitude must lead to concrete choices, to a simple style of life.

The Beatitudes thus bring together the outer being and the inner self. The space which they trace out includes both those who suffer from a lack and those who live in solidarity with them. This fact helps us to understand the second kind of beatitude which can be found in Matt 5,3-12. We can call these the *ethical* beatitudes: happy the merciful, the pure of heart, peacemakers. Those who bear fruits of justice in their lives, the reflection of an inner life yearning for the one thing that matters (Luke 10,42) are likewise situated at that point where God breaks into the world.

In the scene of the last judgment which we find in Matthew's gospel (Matt 25,31-46), Jesus identifies himself with "the least;" in addition, he recognizes as his own those who assist them. These two categories, which also sum up the Beatitudes, are merged in the Biblical figure of the Servant of the Lord (Isa 52,13 — 53,12). This Servant is described as someone who appears as the lowest of the low, but does so in order to heal the wounds of others. And the Servant, whom we could call the Man of the Beatitudes, is the portrait of Jesus himself (Matt 8,16-17; 12,15-21), especially when he gives his life on the cross. In Jesus, teaching and life are inseparable. His life as a poor man marks the space, humanly speaking "empty" and insignificant, where God undertakes the transformation of the world by causing an inexhaustible spring of water to well up. In him, God says to each of us, "Enter into your Master's joy!" (Matt 25,21).

*Jesus reveals
the depths of
God's own heart*

MEDITATING ON THE WORD

JULY

These short readings, taken from the midday prayer in Taizé, can be read several times during the day. The references indicate longer readings. If you have time to read only one, the one in bold type is suggested.

JOHANNINE HOURS

ACTS 2,1-4.32-36

Johannine hours are meant as a way of seeking God in silence and prayer in the midst of our daily life. During the course of a day, take an hour or so to read the Bible passage with the short commentary and to reflect on the questions which follow. Afterwards, a group of 3 to 10 people can meet to share what they have discovered and perhaps for a time of prayer.

1 FRI From now on, your life is hidden with Christ in God. And when Christ — who is your life — is revealed, you also will appear with him in glory.
Col 3.1-4 Mt 6.16-18

2 SAT You have put on a new self that is being renewed in the image of its Creator. Here there is no room for distinction between persons; there is only Christ, who is all and in all.
Col 3.8-11 Mt 6.25-34

3 SUN Paul writes: God said to me: My grace is sufficient for you, for my strength is made perfect in weakness.
2 Co 12.7-10 Mk 6.1-6

4 MON Isaiah said: Prepare a way through the desert for the Lord. Make a straight road for our God.
Is 40.1-5 Mt 7.1-5

5 TUE Jesus said: Whoever listens to my words and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on rock.
Mt 7.24-29 Is 40.6-8

6 WED The Lord tends his flock like a shepherd. He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart.
Is 40.9-11 Mt 8.5-10

7 THU Jesus healed all the sick, fulfilling what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: He bore our sicknesses away and carried our diseases.
Mt 8.14-17 Is 40.25-28

8 FRI Those who hope in the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall run and not grow weary, they shall walk and not be tired.
Is 40.29-31 Mt 8.18-22

9 SAT The Lord says to his people: You are my servant, I have chosen you and will not cast you off. Fear not, for I am with you.
Is 41.8-10 Mt 7.7-11

10 SUN Calling the Twelve to him, Jesus sent them out two by two. And they went preaching the need to change one's heart and they drove out many evil spirits.
Mk 6.7-13 Ep 1.3-14

11 MON The Lord says: When the oppressed and needy search for water and there is none, I the Lord will answer them. I shall not forsake them. I will open rivers upon the barren heights and fountains in the valleys.
Is 41.17-20 Mt 9.1-8

12 TUE Jesus said: I desire mercy, not sacrifice. Indeed, I have not come to call the just, but sinners.
Mt 9.9-13 Is 42.5-7

13 WED The Lord says: I shall lead my people by a road that is unknown to them. I shall turn the darkness into light before them.
Is 42.10/16 Mt 9.14-17

14 THU The Lord says: You are precious in my eyes, I value you and I love you.
Is 43.1-4 Mt 9.18-26

15 FRI Jesus said to his disciples: The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few, so ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest.
Mt 9.35-38 Is 43.10-13

16 SAT God says: Do not dwell upon the past, look, I am doing something new.
Is 43.18-20 Jn 20.19-22

17 SUN When Jesus saw the large crowd, he had compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd, and he began to teach them at length.
Mk 6.30-34 Jr 23.1-6

18 MON The Lord says: Be not afraid, my servant, you whom I have chosen. For I shall pour out water on the thirsty land and streams on the dry ground; I shall pour out my Spirit upon you.
Is 44.1-4 Mt 10.17-25

19 TUE Jesus told those he sent out: Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me; and anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me.
Mt 10.39-42 Is 44.21-23

20 WED Jesus said: Go back and report what you hear and see: the blind receive sight, the lame walk, the dead are raised to life, and good news is proclaimed to the poor.
Mt 11.1-6 Is 45.2-6

21 THU Jesus said of John the Baptist: He is the one of whom scripture says: Look, I am going to send my messenger before you to prepare your way.
Mt 11.7-15 Is 45.18-19

22 FRI The Risen Christ said to Mary of Magdala: Go and find my brothers and tell them: I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.
Jn 20.1/11-18 Rm 8.28-30

23 SAT The Lord says to his people: I have carried you since you were conceived. Until your old age I shall be the same, I shall sustain and save you.
Is 46.3-9 Mt 11.25-30

24 SUN After the people saw the miraculous sign worked by Jesus, they began to say: "Surely this is the prophet who is to come into the world." Jesus, realizing that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, withdrew to the hills again, alone.
Jn 6.1-15 2 K 4.42-44

25 MON St JAMES We carry the treasure of God's glory in earthen vessels so that it may be quite clear that the radiance comes from God, not from us.
2 Co 4.7-11 Mt 20.20-28

26 TUE The people of God did not go thirsty when he led them through the desert; he made water spring out of the rock for them.
Is 48.20-21 Mt 12.1-8

27 WED Jesus fulfilled the words of the prophet Isaiah: My servant will not quarrel or cry out, he will not snuff out the smouldering wick. All the nations will put their hope in him.
Mt 12.15-21 Is 49.13-15

28 THU The Lord has given me a disciple's tongue, so that I may know how to comfort the one who is exhausted.
Is 50.4-7 Mt 13.1-9

29 FRI Jesus said: The seed which was sown in good soil is like someone who hears the Word and understands it; that person bears fruit.
Mt 13.10-23 Is 53.1-5

30 SAT The Lord says: After the ordeal he has endured, my servant will see the light and be content.
Is 53.11-12 Jn 15.9-13

31 SUN Jesus said: I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.
Jn 6.24-35 Ex 16.2-15

"Peter, standing with the Eleven, spoke up in a loud voice" (Acts 2,14). The inhabitants of Jerusalem must have thought that the disciples of the crucified Jesus had been broken by the striking failure of their master, that they had become bitter or filled with the violence of the desperate. What a surprise to discover men on their feet who leave their hiding-place and come to meet them with free and open hearts, people with words of confidence and reconciliation on their lips, eager to share what has changed their life: an encounter with the risen Christ, with his peace and his forgiveness.

Having recognized the Risen Lord, the apostles are without expectations and without regrets. The risen Christ has visited them and filled them with his Spirit. This Spirit is the defender that Jesus had promised—the Spirit of forgiveness, peace, joy, strength and boldness. The miracle of tongues is the seed of a communion that overturns barriers of every sort.

The apostles do not keep for themselves what they have received. With Peter, they proclaim, "The promise is for you, as well as for your children and for all who are far off..." (Acts 2,39). On the rock of the Spirit of the risen Christ, the Kingdom of God is being built, visible and accessible in the communion of the Church. The Risen Lord founds the Church on his forgiveness. It will be a visible expression of his being in the world.

- How can I bear witness to this "Pentecost opening of doors" with its two aspects: going towards others to communicate Christ and welcoming them into a community?
- What recent event, what persons I have met, have been for me bearers of the power and the creative liberty of forgiveness?

You can also read: Colossians 1,15-20; Ephesians 4,12-13

MEDITATING ON THE WORD

AUGUST

These short readings, taken from the midday prayer in Taizé, can be read several times during the day. The references indicate longer readings. If you have time to read only one, the one in bold type is suggested.

JOHANNINE HOURS

MATTHEW 5,13-16

Johannine hours are meant as a way of seeking God in silence and prayer in the midst of our daily life. During the course of a day, take an hour or so to read the Bible passage with the short commentary and to reflect on the questions which follow. Afterwards, a group of 3 to 10 people can meet to share what they have discovered and perhaps for a time of prayer.

1 MON Is 54.8a/10-14 Mt 13.24-30 Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, my faithful love for you will not be shaken, says the Lord.

2 TUE Mt 13.31-32 Is 55.6-9 Jesus said: The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field. Of all seeds it is the smallest, yet once it has grown it is the biggest of plants.

3 WED Is 55.10-13 Mt 13.33-35 The Lord says: As the rain and the snow come down from the sky and do not return before having watered the earth and made it fertile, so is it with the word that goes out from my mouth: it will not return to me before having achieved its purpose.

4 THU 1 Co 1.1-9 Mt 13.44-46 God is faithful and has called you to live in communion with his Son, Jesus Christ.

5 FRI 1 Co 1.17-25 Mt 14.13-21 We proclaim Christ crucified, which to the nations is foolishness, but to those whom God has called it is Christ, the power and the wisdom of God.

6 SAT Mk 9.2-10 2 P 1.16-19 **TRANSFIGURATION** Jesus was transfigured in the presence of his disciples. And a cloud covered them with its shadow, and from the cloud a voice came, saying, "This is my beloved Son; listen to him."

7 SUN Jn 6.41-51 1 K 19.4-8 Jesus said: I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever.

8 MON 1 Co 2.1-5 Mt 15.29-31 St. Paul writes: I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you God's mystery, for I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

9 TUE Mt 16.21-33 1 Co 2.7-12 Jesus said: If anyone wants to follow me, let them renounce themselves and take up their cross and follow me.

10 WED Mt 16.24-28 1 Co 3.5-17 Jesus said: Whoever tries to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for my sake will find it.

11 THU 1 Co 3.18-23 Mt 18.1-5 Paul writes: All things are yours; but you belong to Christ and Christ belongs to God.

12 FRI Mt 18.12-14 1 Co 4.1-5 Jesus said: If a shepherd finds one sheep that was lost, it gives him more joy than ninety-nine others that did not stray at all. In the same way, your Father in heaven does not want even one to be lost.

13 SAT 1 Co 4.9-13 Mt 18.19-22 St. Paul writes: We are fools for Christ. When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it; when we are slandered, we offer comfort in return.

14 SUN Jn 6.51-58 Pr 9.1-6 Jesus said: The bread that I shall give is my flesh, for the life of the world.

15 MON Lk 1.39-56 1 Co 15.20-27 **THE VIRGIN MARY** Mary said: My soul praises the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has been mindful of his humble servant.

16 TUE 1 Co 12.4-11 Mt 19.16-22 There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but it is the same Spirit; there are different ways of serving, but it is the same Lord; there are many forms of activity, but in everybody it is the same God who is at work in them all.

17 WED Mt 19.23-26 1 Co 12.12-25 In astonishment at Jesus' words, the disciples asked him, "Who then can be saved?" Jesus looked at them and said, "By human resources this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

18 THU 1 Co 12.26-31 Mt 20.29-34 You are the body of Christ. Each one of you is a part of it.

19 FRI 1 Co 13.1-7 Mt 21.33-46 Love is patient and kind, love is not jealous, boastful or conceited. Love does not seek its own advantage, it does not take offence or harbour grievances. Love does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but finds its joy in the truth.

20 SAT Mt 21.28-32 1 Co 13.8-13 Jesus said: A father said to his two sons, "Go and work in the vineyard today." The first replied, "I will not," but afterwards thought better of it and went. The second replied, "Certainly, sir," but did not go. Which of the two did the father's will? Those listening said, "The first."

21 SUN Jn 6.60-69 Ep 5.21-32 Seeing that many of his disciples were turning away, Jesus said to the Twelve, "What about you, do you want to go away too?" Peter answered, "Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words of eternal life."

22 MON Is 56.1-7 Jn 4.1-14 The Lord says: Do what is right and act with justice, for my salvation is close at hand and my deliverance will soon be revealed.

23 TUE Is 57.14-15 Jn 4.14-26 The Lord says: My home is a high and holy place, but I am with the humble and contrite to revive their spirit.

24 WED Jn 4.27-42 Is 58.9-11 Jesus said: My food is to do the will of the One who sent me and to complete his work.

25 THU Is 59.21 Jn 4.43-54 The Lord says: I have given you my Spirit. My words that I have put in your mouth will not leave you from this time on and forever.

26 FRI Is 60.18-20 Jn 5.1-9 The Lord says to his people: No longer will violence be heard of in your land. You will call your gates "Praise". The sun will no more be your light by day, nor will the brightness of the moon shine on you, for the Lord will be your everlasting light, your God will be your glory.

27 SAT Is 61.1-2 Jn 3.16-17 The Lord sent me to bring good news to the poor, to bind up the brokenhearted and to proclaim freedom to those in captivity.

28 SUN Lk 14.17-14 Jm 1.17-27 Jesus said: When you have a dinner, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind, and you will be blessed, for they have no means to repay you.

29 MON Is 61.10-11 Jn 10.1-10 I exult for joy in the Lord, my soul rejoices in my God, for he has clothed me in garments of salvation and wrapped me in a mantle of innocence.

30 TUE Jn 10.11-15 Is 62.1-2 Jesus said: I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep.

31 WED Is 63.7-14 Jn 11.1-45 I will tell of the kindnesses of the Lord and of the many good things he has done for his people. God's Spirit guided them to rest.

Speaking to a crowd that was surely very diverse, Jesus expresses what he sees in them. "You are the salt of the earth...the light of the world" We can imagine how surprised his hearers must have been! He isn't speaking about the future but about the present. He doesn't say, "One day you will be...if....," but "You are." Christ sees the hidden depths of those who listen to him, their deepest identity, and he wants to reveal it to them. When we read these words, Christ makes us too realize what we are, what our eyes do not see yet.

Salt of the earth. Like food, Jesus seems to say, human life needs to be seasoned. How can we live if life seems tasteless? By their search for the living God and for his Kingdom, those who listen to Christ give this taste to all those whom they meet. More than by this or that personal quality, they awaken others to a taste for life by their longing for God.

Light of the world. The two following images, that of a city on a hilltop (v. 14) and a lamp in a house (v. 15), express the fact that it is unthinkable to wish to hide what is already existing and shining. What we have to do, says Jesus, is not so much to show the gift God has already given to us, but simply not to hide it. To let the light God has placed in us shine out. Through "your good works" (v. 16), in other words our concern for those who are nearby, another presence makes itself felt, close to us.

- Among people I know, who is like "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world"? What strikes me about them?
- How do the words of Christ illuminate my life and familiar situations? How can I realize that Christ speaks these words—"you are salt and light"—to me, and dare to take them seriously?

In the first part of this article (*Letter from Taizé*, Dec-Jan), a young couple from Budapest recalled: "The story of the relations between Taizé and the countries of Eastern Europe has never been written... That story is also in part our own, that of a young Hungarian couple influenced by Taizé for many years." Now they tell some pieces of that story.

We came to know Taizé in Budapest, at the end of the 1970s. But the links between the community and Eastern Europe go back much further. A brother of Taizé, who has since died, began to make regular visits to Christians in East Germany already in 1962, one year after the Berlin wall was built. Then visits throughout Eastern Europe followed. In the beginning, they were made by brothers of the community, but soon young people took part in these visits too, which made it possible for their number to increase. The purpose was to support the courage of persecuted Christians, to encourage with prudence and discernment initiatives that could be undertaken, to help people not to succumb to fear or discouragement.

In East Germany, already at the end of the 1970s it was possible, with the collaboration of Lutheran and Catholic bishops, to organize significant gatherings of young people. These meetings, in Dresden, Magdeburg, Erfurt, Schwerin, and finally in East Berlin, were prepared for years in a hidden way and brought together thousands of participants. Churches full of young people throughout East Germany, as well as in other countries, confronted the police with an unprecedented situation. Reluctantly, the regime had to grant Brother Roger a visa to speak in public. In spite of the great tension, there were no incidents.

We took part ourselves in the meeting in East Berlin in October 1986. Two large churches, the Marienkirche, a Lutheran church on the famous Alexanderplatz, and the Catholic cathedral, were used for the prayers. Brother Roger, accompanied by Cardinal Meisner and the Lutheran Bishop Forck, went from one church to the other, both crowded with young East Germans from throughout the country.

On the eve of the fall of the Berlin wall, before going into the streets for the decisive demonstrations of 1989, many prayed in the churches, using the songs of Taizé, for the demonstrations to take place peacefully and without hatred. In East Germany there is gratitude for the spirit communicated to many Christians, recapitulated in the title of Brother Roger's book, *Struggle and Contemplation*.

In the early 1980s, the preparation of a similar gathering was attempted in Hungary. Since it was impossible to print any texts, the preparation was limited to personal contacts. There were two years of incessant visits. Young people sent by Taizé and supported by young Austrians from Vienna joined the Hungarians to make as many contacts as possible. The government became frightened, and said it would not permit such a large gathering and that there would be sanctions. In order not to cause trouble for its Hungarian

friends, Taizé decided to cancel the meeting. But Brother Roger and a few brothers came to Hungary shortly afterwards with ordinary tourist visas. Thanks to a huge network of contacts throughout the country, it was possible to spread the news everywhere, from person to person, concerning the date of their arrival in Budapest and their itinerary from church to church on a Saturday and Sunday. Brother Roger was not permitted to speak a single word in public in churches packed to overflowing. He could only greet personally, one after the other, young people who had come from the whole of Hungary by saying to each one in Hungarian, "Christ is risen!"

On two occasions a similar event took



Taizé and Eastern Europe

(Part Two)



place in Prague, under the same conditions. Both times, the Czechoslovakian government forbade Brother Roger to speak during prayers that were held in churches. One of the founders of Charter 77, Radim Palous, quoted some words of Brother Roger's during a secret meeting at a home in the city: "If, like you, I cannot speak, then I will be silent with you." This sharing of silence had a great impact on many Christians. The second time, in 1988, during one of the prayers in a church, Vaclav Havel was present in the midst of the crowd. Just out of prison, he could never have imagined that, two years later, as President of Czechoslovakia, he would welcome 80,000 young adults from throughout Europe who came together in Prague for a meeting organized by Taizé!

In Czechoslovakia, on many occasions young people from Taizé went to be present at meetings that were held in the mountains. So as not to attract the attention of the police, the participants were in the habit of bringing skis with them. As soon as there was a risk of being found out, the young Christians who had gathered to pray and to reflect turned into enthusiastic fans of winter sports.

In Poland, contacts with Taizé go back to the 1960s; the first to be involved were Catholic intellectuals. Jerzy Turowicz, who started the influential newspaper *Tygodnik Powszechny*, philosophers and bishops became friends of the community. Cardinal Wojtyla himself, the future John Paul II, came to Taizé twice and welcomed Brother Roger to his home in Krakow. Bonds of trust multiplied in an even more astonishing way with the next generation. Even under the martial law of 1981, thousands of young Poles remained in contact with Taizé. It is easy to understand why, today, more than one thousand a week come to Taizé in the summer, and tens of thousands take part in the European meetings at the end of the year.

During the most recent European meetings in Vienna and Munich, many were struck when they saw a representative of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Moscow in the midst of the young Europeans. Here too, there are links going back many years. From the beginning, the community was attentive to Russian Orthodox spirituality. The icons (the icon of the Virgin in the Church of Reconciliation was blessed in 1962 in Taizé by Metropolitan Nikodim of Leningrad), the sense of mystery in the liturgy, frequent references to Dostoyevsky, Russian chants in the common prayer, all make young Orthodox Christians feel at home in Taizé.

During the Soviet regime, it was necessary to be extremely prudent. In those days, it was easiest for citizens of Finland to visit young Russians who were in touch with Taizé. Brother Roger went himself to Moscow in 1978 to try and encourage young people. To have the smallest contact with anyone, it was necessary to elude police surveillance present 24 hours a day. Ten years later, Brother Roger was invited by the Patriarchate of Moscow for the thousand years' celebration of the Russian Orthodox Church. When authorities in the Patriarchate told him how great the need was for Bibles, Taizé collected funds to print one million New Testaments in Russian. The project was begun in 1988 and, in March 1989, nine lorries crossed the border and brought the one million New Testaments to Moscow, Kiev, Minsk and Leningrad. The risk was great, since no written authorization had been given, and it was still several months before the fall of the Berlin wall.

In part three of this article, Anna and Zsolt will tell how their personal life was marked by all these events and how young Hungarians began to come to Taizé and to the European meetings. This article was published in the October 1993 issue of the review *Christus*.



listening to the continents

Brazil

From Death to Resurrection

For years now, Taizé brothers have been living in Brazil, in a poor district of the city of Alagoinhas. They have undertaken many initiatives to help the development of the district, and to enable children to go to school. Here they tell how they renewed the celebration of Holy Week, before Easter:

Traditionally in Brazil, Holy Week is summed up in the procession of the "dead Lord" on Good Friday. On Holy Saturday, Judas is burned in effigy, in the midst of fireworks. Easter Sunday is not an important feast day for the people.

To emphasize the significance of the whole week, we proposed four main celebrations in our district:

Holy Thursday is the last day of the stations of the cross which take place during Lent in all the districts. In homes and in the streets, these gatherings for the stations of the cross are very popular. Even families who almost never go to church insist on having one in their home. On Holy Thursday, the celebration begins with the "washing of the feet," taking up the symbol of love and service that Jesus accomplished for his disciples (John 13). Two groups of women wash the women's feet; one group of men wash the men's feet. The feet of the children who crowd into the central part of the church are also washed. Then the Eucharist is celebrated, in an atmosphere of reconciliation.

Friday afternoon, at the hour when Jesus was crucified, there is a prayer of the cross on a hill which is the poorest part of the slum. Two workers recently died there in a workplace accident due to negligence. In the evening, the young people of the neighbourhood act out the passion of Christ. The prayer concludes with a celebration of the resurrection, be-

cause we have learned by experience that part of the crowd will not be present on Easter day.

Saturday evening, baptisms of children and youths are celebrated at the entrance to the church. The ceremony begins with a procession of the paschal candle, and everyone holds a small candle which they light from the paschal candle. After the baptisms, the first Easter celebration is held in the church.

Sunday morning, just before dawn, at 5:40am, a fire is lit in front of the church. After singing together briefly, all those present leave, in two large groups, to sing news of the resurrection all through the district. When they return, a small festive meal with the children precedes the great Easter celebration, during which the whole assembly expresses its joy to take part in the resurrection of Christ.

India

Bearing a Gospel Light

At the end of 1993, two Taizé brothers were invited by the different churches of Kerala to lead a month of meetings in that state in the South of India. This pilgrimage, which lasted several weeks, ended with a weekend in common for all:

The icon of the cross, carried in procession by youth from different Christian organisations, is led by children bearing incense, lights and flowers. Finally it is set up on a stage at one end of the prayer hall, specially extended for the occasion by a pandal. The stage is decorated with palm branches, icons and a multitude of lamps. The Archbishop of Verapoly lights the Indian lamp. Thus began the Friday evening prayer. On the Sunday, some one thousand young people took part in a celebration at Ernakulam, a large city on the Arabian Sea. The day was the climax to a whole series of gatherings in many parts of Kerala, for members of youth organisations of the different churches. They came from all over Kerala, as well as from Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and even two young people all the way from Bangladesh.

The program was made up of times of prayer together and times of sharing. Many said the strongest moment for them was the prayer of resurrection on the Saturday evening, with hundreds of candles all the way round the hall. Many leaders from different Churches were present. The times of sharing were centred on the theme, "Will you be a bearer of a Gospel light?" considered from various perspectives: through prayer; where mistrust and violence spring up; through a "yes" for an entire lifetime; in my everyday life; through attention to the very poor; working with others to make our parishes and communities places of unity and reconciliation.

"When I think of this month of pilgrimage in Kerala," one young man wrote, "I can still hear such a diversity of music: the Syrian chant of the prayer in the Jacobite Seminary in Vitickal, the youth choir animating the Holy Qurbana in Kurishupalli, the traditional hymn sung with such vigour by the Marthoma youth at Adoor, and all of these interspersed with the 'Taizé bajans,' as people say here. There are many different Christian youth organisations in Kerala and they work enthusiastically in many areas of human life. But there are few inter-change opportunities among them. The pilgrimage of trust is important because it will be a unique opportunity for young people from different backgrounds and walks of life to come together, to share together and to pray together, and thereby to discover a kind of unity among them all. The pilgrimage allows each one of us to discover that we need the others in order to give the best of ourselves."

Latin America

The Hour of Anguish

A letter has arrived from a country whose name cannot be mentioned so as not to compromise the writer. In reading it, we can think of all the people who are currently going through difficult situations.

What would be the last word to say to one's friends at a time of anguish and death? I would like to entrust you to God and to thank you for all we have lived together. If I accepted the good times why not also remain faithful in painful hours?

The people of our country are very brave to live at this time of extreme violence.

I am not afraid for my life, since it is completely in God's hands. But being God's friend, I must witness to human life, respect and freedom. God alone is our security and we gather each day in his presence to ask him to enlighten and protect us. In this way we keep peace of heart.

Letter from Taizé

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